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COUNTRY East Germany

REPORT

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TOPIC Military Activities in the Area of Mechanized Division Potsdam

## EVALUATION

PLACE OBTAINED

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DATE OF CONTENT

DATE OBTAINED

DATE PREPARED 14 February 1955

25X1

## REFERENCES

PAGES 5 ENCLOSURES (NO. & TYPE)

REMARKS

This is UNEVALUATED Information

25X1

1. Between 3 and 14 January, it was learned that the new commander of the mechanized unit in the former Oranienburg concentration camp was Major Backhaus (fnu). The men of the unit wore light-blue collar patches. 1
2. [redacted] tanks of a new model were expected to arrive shortly. Only the most efficient tank drivers were allegedly scheduled to drive these tanks.
3. At 0600 on 12 January, a long motor column was parked on the main camp street. It included, listed in sequential order, motor vehicles as follows: The first vehicle was an armored scout car occupied by an officer and one other man and was followed by 20 to 30 trucks each of which carried 16 to 18 soldiers with rifles. Next came numerous tanks each of which was followed by a truck occupied by about 18 submachine gunners. These vehicles were followed by trucks which towed guns. The last vehicles in the column were several jeeps which were occupied by officers. The vehicles were parked at intervals of about 4 meters. The column allegedly included all the units in the barracks installation which were going to hold an exercise in the Lehnitz woods. 2
4. On about 10 January, NVP tank soldiers picked up ammunition at the Soviet ammunition depot at night. [redacted]  
[redacted]
5. From 5 to 10 January 1955, only soldiers wearing blue and black-bordered blue collar patches were observed in the former Oranienburg concentration camp. On 5 January, two platoons each of which numbered 30 men who carried rifles and submachine guns, marched from the barracks installation over the sluice bridge to the east. The soldiers carried ammunition boxes, aiming silhouettes and small red flags. On 10 January, 150 men who were equipped with submachine guns marched to NY

25X1

25X1

25X1

# INDEX

CLASSIFICATION SECRET

25X1

SECRET, [REDACTED]

25X1

- 2 -

the training ground east of Lehnitz See. Starting at 1100, the reports of rifles were constantly heard from the installation. 4

6. On 17 January, the total of men quartered in the installation was estimated at about 500 men. On 12 and 13 January, no activity was observed in the area of the installation and the training ground. On 17 January, the same observation was made except for three tanks which followed each other at intervals of about 50 meters in the training area north of the installation. 2

25X1

7. At about 1100 on 7 January, seven SU-76 SF guns travelled from the Ruinenberg Kaserne in Potsdam to the Bornstedter Feld where they fired at dummy tanks from various positions. At about noon, a company, soldiers of which wore medium-blue collar patches and carried rifles and submachine guns, also marched from the installation to the Bornstedter Feld where they occupied the trenches which were excavated previously. Two companies were observed at drill in the barracks area on Pappel Allee, and one company wearing medium-blue collar patches drilled with rifles in the courtyard on Schlegel Allee.

8. On 18 January, the installation quartered an estimated 1,200 men. At about 1000, two companies wearing medium-blue collar patches held an exercise on Ruinenberg (hill). The one company held a defensive position on the western hillside, while the other company attacked this position, rushing gradually forward by squads. The exercise involved no heavy weapons or machine guns. Three platoons were observed at aiming practices in the area of the Bornstedter Feld. From Pappel Allee, seven SU-76 guns were observed in storage sheds whose doors stood open. 4

9. On 7 January, 8 men wearing red-bordered black collar patches were observed receiving instruction at a 37-mm AA gun in each of the four riding yards in the Garde du Corps Kaserne. Eight more 37-mm AA guns were observed in various sheds. A platoon was observed at record practice and another at aiming practice in the yard on Neue Koenig Strasse. On 10 January, another platoon was observed at record practice. The billets on Heiligen See which had a capacity of about 120 men were almost completed. 5

10. On 15 January, no outdoor activity was observed at the installation. On 18 January, 4 platoons wearing red-bordered black collar patches were observed at drill with rifles in the yard on Behlert Strasse, while in the yard on Neue Koenig Strasse one platoon was observed at physical training, another at record practice, and a third at aiming practice. The installation still quartered an estimated 350 men. 5

11. At about 1000 on 8 January, 2 trucks each of which towed a 57-mm AT gun left the General Wever Kaserne. Each truck was occupied by 8 men who wore red-bordered black collar patches and carried rifles. The vehicles were followed by another truck which was occupied by 16 men who wore medium-blue collar patches and carried rifles and submachine guns. On 14 January, the installation quartered an estimated 1,400 men. At about 1100, two companies held an exercise in a small woods west of the installation during which the one company whose

SECRET, [REDACTED]

25X1

SECRET/

25X1

- 3 -

soldiers wore medium-blue collar patches held a defensive position against the assault of the other company men of which also wore medium-blue collar patches. No weapons other than rifles and submachine guns were observed during this practice. At about 1130, 4 trucks each of which was occupied by 16 men who wore medium-blue collar patches and carried rifles and submachine guns travelled toward Marquardter Chaussee. 6

12. On 15 January, a KVP officer [ ] was ordered to make billets available for another 300 men in the Ruinenberg Kaserne. The actual figure of occupation was allegedly about 1,200 men. [ ] Captain Fichte (fnu), a previous department chief in the QNA, was reassigned as ration supply officer for the General Wever Kaserne. This officer allegedly [ ] had to provide for billets for another 300 to 400 men in this installation prior to March 1955. [ ] he was in charge of almost 1,500 men. 7
13. [ ]
14. Prior to 16 January, the area of the Ferchels-Mahlitz troop troop training grounds near Alletz was still cordoned off, especially closely after 6 January. Intensified cordoning-off measures were allegedly to continue until 28 January. From 4 to 16 January, tank, artillery and mortar units were stationed at the training grounds. Record firing practices of all three branches of service were held daily until late at night. On 4, 6, 11 and 14 January, night firing practices were also held. At about 1600 on 11 January, 5 mortars, apparently of 160 mm, and about 60 KVPs were observed at change of positions between Mahlitz and Molkenberg. At about 1900 on 13 January, 32 tanks travelled from the Molkenberg area toward Havelberg. They included 15 JS-2 tanks and 17 T-34/85 tanks. At about 1700, 20 AT guns of an estimated 100 mm which were towed by caterpillar tractors were observed in the same area. 8
15. On 6 January, the training grounds was completely cordoned off. Practices held at the site included day and night exercises which were followed by a parade involving about 4,000 to 5,000 men. These practices and the parade were connected with an inspection by Ulbricht and Paulus. 8
16. From 4 to 16 January, no Soviet units were observed.
17. On 13 January, [ ] exercises were being held again. For example, guns allegedly fired from the artillery emplacements on Trill See (lake). KVPs from Premnitz [ ] were also at the training grounds. A KVP unit from Brandenburg was allegedly expected to arrive shortly. 8

25X1

25X1

SECRET/

25X1

SECRET

25X1

- 4 -

1. Comment. A previous report has mentioned that Lieutenant Colonel Klebsch (fnu) has been reassigned. 25X1  
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2. Comment. 25X1  

The column possibly has also included component units of the medium tank regiment as the trucks occupied by submachine gunners have presumably belonged to the submachine gun battalion of this regiment. The column has possibly left for the Ferchels-Mahlitz training grounds. This belief is substantiated by the low occupation strength and the statement that practically no activity was observed after 12 January. 25X1
3. Comment. Live ammunition is apparently issued by the Soviet units to the KVPs only from time to time. Presumably this is a local measure. 25X1
4. Comment. Regular training activity commenced on 3 January. It is noted that practices are already being held at company level. It is known from the Korps Nord area that recruits have been divided up and assigned to the individual units. 25X1
5. Comment. The present report mentions a total of 12 x 37-mm AA guns. Since previous reports have mentioned that new guns have been dispatched to Eggersdorf, the regiment possibly has an actual stock of only 12 x 37-mm AA guns. 25X1  

Each battery apparently includes four guns. 25X1  
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6. Comment. It is believed that the medium-blue service collar and the 57-mm AT guns mentioned in the present report belong to the reconnaissance battalion which is stationed at the installation, while the soldiers wearing red-bordered black collar patches probably belong to the artillery command company. It is noted that the present report fails to mention yellow-bordered black collar patches although the signal battalion is also known to be in this installation. 25X1  
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7. Comment. It is not considered unlikely that 200 to 300 men be assigned as replacements to the mechanized regiment located in the Ruinenberg Kaserne. Units known in the General Wever Kaserne include the reconnaissance battalion, the signal battalion and various minor headquarters units of Mechanized Division Potsdam. For these units, the reported strength of almost 1,500 men and the allegedly planned strength of 1,800 men is too high. Possibly, an additional unit will move to the installation. A previous report mentioned that 200 men have allegedly moved from the Ruinenberg Kaserne to this installation. 25X1  
25X1

SECRET

25X1

SECRET

25X1

8. Comment. The places from which the units assembled at Ferchels-Mahlitz came are still undetermined. It is believed that these troops are component units of Mechanized Division Potsdam. Possibly they have included units from Oranienburg according to the Comment to paragraph 2, the mortar regiment from Premnitz and the artillery regiment from Gloewen. The JS-2 tanks mentioned in the present report tend to indicate that the exercises have also involved at least component units of the heavy tank SP regiment from Burg. The objective of the exercises is also still undetermined. For a pure officers' training course as indicated in paragraph 13, the number of troops observed is too high. In view of the parade which is also mentioned in the present report, it is not considered unlikely that these activities have been large-scale demonstrations which have possibly also served instruction purposes.

25X1

SECRET

25X1